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Q: ...the statement today that more than half of the remaining troops there are expected to be home by Christmas. It certainly seems that much of the mission is being accomplished.

I wondered if you could talk about what you see coming down the road the rest of this year and into early January, and what lessons you think the United States has learned from this experience.

A: First of all, we don't have an agreed schedule for pulling troops out of there yet. So the report you heard was just somebody's estimate.

I will be reviewing in a lot of detail on Saturday a plan for phasing down, but it's certainly not agreed at this stage.

I am going to have to look at the functions we're performing there, and as each function gets performed and it's completed, then we can pull those units out. An example, we have had there for some time a hostage rescue team for the contingency that there would be a major attempt to take American citizens or embassy people hostage. We see that threat as being greatly subsided now, and so we can send them back.

We have a whole [inaudible] General Shelton who was down there originally because we were expecting a military operation, an invasion. So he and that command ship have gone back now.

We have multinational forces coming in. There are almost 2000 troops around the country. When they come in, we will pass the baton to them, and as they get trained up, we'll pull them up.

Most importantly, we have the Haitian police force that will come up. That's going to take place over many months. As that Haitian police force begins to take on security functions then a lot of our troops, including our military police. So it's a very complicated picture. We see certainly thousands of troops coming out in the next couple of months, but I don't have at this point a schedule which I'm willing to sign off on as to how quickly they will be coming out.

Q: ...complaints that [inaudible] last week, the U.S. military not attacking [inaudible] preparatory to more UN and international peacekeeping forces taking over. [inaudible] I don't know whether you saw the complaints or not.

A: [inaudible] about what it is we're doing. The whole interaction of the military and the whole set of actions we have in avoiding military conflicts between Haitian military armed forces and Haitian, the citizens of Haiti, has gone remarkably well. I don't know how anybody can criticize that. It's far better than we had ever expected it to go. Part of this is because we're working [inaudible]. Because we got an agreement, we did not have to go in as an invading army. That was a great advantage. Having on in there, we're also treating them with respect and seeking and getting their cooperation. I think that has saved American lives and probably reduced the violence level in general. So I think it's been a very successful operation.

Now we did take immediately all the heavy weapons [inaudible]. But the process of disarming the island of Haiti is a daunting prospect, and I don't think it's a reasonable objective to think that we could take all of the arms out of all that. It's not just a matter of small arms that the military has, it's small arms that the citizens have. Those are certainly things that [inaudible], located in nooks and crannies in people's houses and garages and places like that.

Q: Would you say that the UN complaints were premature or ill informed?

A: I don't want to comment on their complaints. I just want to say what I think we're doing, and I think it's reasonable... I'm very pleased with what we're doing. First of all, dealing with the FAd'H, the Haitian military, dealing with the Haitian police, and disarming, to the extent we've done disarming I think it's been [a good program]. I do not believe that [inaudible]. Just imagine the problem of trying to get rid of all the small arms in Philadelphia, for example. [inaudible]

Q: In Somalia we had a bad experience in transferring the U.S. command to the UN [commander]. In Haiti, where [inaudible], it seems there will be a U.S. commander of the UN force. Do you anticipate that there will be similar problems, or how can one avoid replicating the Haiti situation where the international force [inaudible]?

A: I think the situation's so different that a comparison is hard to make. One really fundamental difference is the government of Haiti. There was not any

government in Somalia. Therefore, the UN force not only had its various security functions to carry out, but it was trying to make do [inaudible] no government there. It was a much more difficult task.

Secondly, the UN force in this case, you were correct, will be under a U.S. commander. So the person in command of the U.S. forces will also be the person commanding the UN forces. We will have probably just under 50 percent of the total force. We'll have not a majority of the forces there, but we will have a plurality, we'll have more than any other forces.

Third, we will have had to run up the operation, or run down, because we're going to be reducing the level of troops there. A very [inaudible]. Again, so much of the success of not only what we're doing now but of what the UN forces is going to do is going to depend on the success of the Haitian government in bringing up the police force.

This is not well reported in the newspapers. A large part of our effort there today is helping to train -- our U.S. Government and other nations, not the Defense Department primarily, but the Justice Department.

Q: Are there any areas you can point to where you've had success training a foreign national police force?

A: The U.S.?

Q: I was just wondering is there something we should look to or that you're looking to as a mode of... It seems to me what I have heard is repeated failures. The Guatemalan's. Certainly Panama is not [inaudible] turn over the police force. I'm just wondering if there are success stories or if there's any reason to think that [inaudible].

A: That's a very good question. I'm probably not the best person to answer because bringing up the police force is not a Defense Department task, it's a Justice Department task. By observing, I'm quite impressed with what they're doing.

I do believe that what they have already done in Cap-Haitien is likely to be a success story. It's premature to call it successful, but that's been very impressive. It's taking people from [inaudible] nations and giving them a crash training program; it's taking some of the existing policemen, vetting them, picking out the best of them, putting them in, and then having them initially under the supervision of U.S. military forces. They're now operating and [inaudible] U.S. military forces. One or the other nations had [inaudible].

Q: Guatemala.

A: That seems to be working well so far. We are now bringing up police forces in, newly vetted police forces in Port au Prince. It's too early to call that program a success, but it's been successfully launched. We're establishing a police academy which will begin probably next month. A real professional training course, four months. We, in this case, the Defense Department, [inaudible] I think it's the Justice Department [inaudible].

That whole operation is going much better than I expected it to go. I have felt from the beginning that that was the crucial factor to how well the turning over to a civil government, how quickly we can get our military forces out of there depends on how quickly that police force [inaudible].

Q: Could I ask you about Korea? The agreement that we reached [inaudible], some people have argued that this is basically [inaudible] because not only does it allow the North Koreans to maintain, or [inaudible], but it also [inaudible]. This was an issue that we have taken a very strong stand on, [inaudible], and we postponed it for five years. Can you say something about how this, the [inaudible]?

A: Sure. I've read some of your columns on that. I don't agree with them. Let me say that right off the bat.

Q: [inaudible]

A: Let me start off by saying I think this agreement is very good for the security of the United States. During the formulative phases, during the phase when we were negotiating it, I was one of the President's advisers on what position we should take. I took a very hard line on what ought to be in that agreement. [inaudible] were quite unwilling to accept some of the proposals the North Koreans originally were making to us.

The single most important part of that agreement is the freeze agreement that absolutely stops that program in its tracks.

As you know and as you've pointed out in your columns, many of the other phases of the agreement take many years to kick in. Therefore, if we did not have the freeze agreement there's a distinct possibility that they would string us along for years and years and whenever they wanted to freeze the agreement they could do it. But the freeze provisions means there's no benefit to them for doing it. Indeed, every year they're in that agreement under the freeze, they're worse off in terms of [inaudible] then than they would be compared with right now.

I have to keep asking myself as I look at this agreement, understanding that they could abrogate it or leave it two years from now or five years from now, would we be better off at that point as compared to where we were at the beginning of the agreement. My answer to that is we are substantially better off with this

agreement, because no matter what happens in the future, we are at least as well off, and in some cases better off, than we were before we had the agreement. The worst that could happen to us is we're back to where we were last June when we were prepared to go to sanctions to force [inaudible].

The second piece of the agreement which to me [inaudible] was the dismantling. My estimate is, we had to get those facilities, the dismantling of the agreement [inaudible]. The north Koreans were quite unwilling to dismantle them initially for reasons which are very easy to understand. Once they dismantle them, they've lost all of their leverage. In the mean time, the benefits [inaudible], the reactors, don't kick until nine or ten years in the future. So from their point of view it was perfectly reasonable for them to say that they will withhold the dismantling until they get the reactor. As you know, a key feature of the agreement was the critical point of the agreement is when we delivered the nuclear component of the reactor, and that's when they have to make their concessions [inaudible].

So those are two absolutely critical factors to that agreement, and once we had those two factors, I was willing to be open about considering other things we might do to make the agreement more [inaudible] to them.

There was one other feature which was a non-negotiable feature, which I supported, but which was actually advanced by the South Korean government. That is there had to be a provision for North/South dialogue in the agreement. I don't know how close you've followed it in the last couple of days, but the agreements almost broke off over that. We were prepared to walk away, to break off the talks on that feature, and it was only in the last day that we finally got an agreement from them. We simply were tough on that point.

Q: How firm is that agreement that there will be dialogue?

A: It's firm, but I have to acknowledge that the quality of the dialogue is absolutely up to the two parties. They can go and sit in the room and read the newspapers or talk trivialities. That could happen.

Q: Is there a date certain for success?

A: I don't have that in my head.

Q: Is it a requirement which if the North Koreans do not fulfill then [inaudible]?

A: If they don't fulfill it they won't get their reactor. The reason I'm so confident on that is because the reactor's being paid for largely by South Korea.

The really important point is that all the leverage in this agreement was on our side, not their side. They get nothing out of this if they refuse and they don't comply with the very features that are important to us. In the mean time, they will

have stopped cold the program. The spent fuel is sitting there eroding away, they're not allowed to put fuel in the reactor to reload it. So the program is just dead in the water.

Q: [inaudible] benefits are all attained from the accord, how then does one deal with the issue that one has to be flexible on the terms of obedience to the NPT in order to get the North Koreans to sign. What was that? [inaudible]

A: I think it gives no leverage at all to them. I truly believe this [inaudible]. There's not another case in the world anything like North Korea in terms of, first of all, how far advanced they were with their nuclear capability; and secondly, the fact that it was coupled with a conventional military threat of very formidable dimensions. This million man army, two-thirds of them faced right up against the border. There's just no other situation in the world, today or in the predictable future that would be comparable to that, and therefore I can't ever see any incentive in negotiating an agreement like that with another country.

Q: In the case of Iran you don't think there's a possibility that having learned the North Korean lesson the Iranians might threaten, and then demand [inaudible].

A: There are a lot of lessons you can learn from the North Koreans. One of them was that we were prepared to take very strong action in North Korea if they had not come to this agreement.

You have to remember this negotiation took place over a 17 month time period, and the most instructive part of that time period was the [inaudible] last June. Last June when they broke off the negotiations and began pulling the fuel out of their reactor, we were proceeding on a parallel course of action which we were very clear we were going to do, and w were very public about saying we were going to do it, and we were within literally a day of having pulled the trigger. One of them was imposing sanctions on North Korea; and the second was augmenting our troop deployments in South Korea. both of these actions were underway, and both of them were literally within a day or two of enacting when North Korea backed off their position and agreed to go back and start talking about a program to terminate that nuclear weapon.

The triggering event there was President Carter visiting North Korea. But what motivated the North Koreans to make this proposal, I'm perfectly convinced, is the very firm position that we took as to what actions we were going to take. It's literally true, we were sitting in the Cabinet room laying those proposals out for the President's final approval when we got the call from Pyong Yang, from President Carter. It was that close...

Q: A last minute calls from President Carter.

A: Yes.

One other point for Trudy. [inaudible] disagreed with one of your arguments, if I can remember correctly, is suggesting that [inaudible], buying the reactor, buying the oil, [inaudible] price of the compliance with the NPT. I want to [inaudible]. The cost is for the benefits which the United States offered [inaudible] for freezing and dismantling, neither of which they [inaudible].

Q: [inaudible]

A: First of all, it was an economic burden to them, for which they had some reason to [inaudible].

Q: The situation in Haiti is stabilizing nicely. The Korea crisis has been defused. Saddam Hussein is flushed back into his lair for the time being...

A: I wish I could pocket all of those things. That would be wonderful.

Q: What do you worry about these days? What are the things that keep you up at night?

A: All during this period my number one concern is Russia. Russia's a friendly country, and I spend a lot of my time working with Russians, going to Russia, and the U.S. Government, our Administration has spent a lot of time maintaining friendly relations with Russia, doing things we can to help sustain stability. Nevertheless, their country still has 25,000 nuclear weapons, and they're a country in which their political and economic problems can create instabilities at any time.

There is an outside chance that there will be an unfavorable turn in Russia, and a new government will come in which is hostile to the West. So if you imagine a bad turn in which there's a hostile government still having these 25,000 nuclear weapons, then you've got a lot more to worry about. So we have to keep front and center, we have to worry first of all about a country that if it turn bad can do you the greatest harm, and that's Russia. So Russia is my number one priority. Korea came right behind that. In Korea we don't have that pocketed yet. We have a long, difficult road ahead of us to implement that agreement. Part of that road involves, as Trudy pointed out, a North/South dialogue which is bound to be pretty damn rocky. So Korea is right there behind it.

I worry about the extremists in the Islamic movement gaining greater control in various nations, various Islamic nations, some of which have civil governments, but what you worry about is an Iran-type government gaining control in some of those larger countries. That could be a very [inaudible] threat in the world.

I worry about the 38,000 Cubans we have in our camps in Guantanamo with no light at the end of the tunnel for them. Those are some of the things that occupy my...

Q: Can we go back to the Islamic extremists for a minute? Are there any countries where [inaudible] escalating in there?

A: Algeria would be number one in terms of the activity. They have an active, well armed resistance movement in Algeria, resisting the non-clerical government. Whatever you think or say about the government in Algeria today, it's not a clerical government. The resistance movement there is trying to impose an Iranian type clerical government.

Q: Do you see that as a place in which we may have to get involved sooner rather than later?

A: We, the United States?

Q: Right.

A: No, I do not see the United States getting involved in Algeria. France is very much involved in Algeria.

Q: That didn't turn out so well the last time, which is why I ask, when is the United States possibly going to have to get involved?

A: We are much more likely to be involved, if need be, in countries where we have more of a traditional access and relationship. There are plenty of Islamic countries we have very close relationships with -- Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Indonesia, Pakistan. All of these countries in one degree or another are worried about extremist trends in the country.

Q: You spoke very eloquently about the need to get some [inaudible], more robust NATO action on Bosnia. What's come out of [inaudible] is a sort of modified [inaudible] formula where there's still a dual arrangement on controls [inaudible], and where according to General [inaudible] they still want [inaudible].

Can you explain what was gained out of all of this back and forth between NATO and the UN, and if NATO has any more freedom? Secondly, now that there is a more aggressive offensive campaign being waged by the Muslims and maybe even the Croats, what does that mean about the role that you see the U.S. and NATO playing? Especially since the UN is going to determine that that role should stay as small as it has been up until now?

A: There's a lot wrapped up in those questions. I'll try not to be too long-winded in my answer, but I have to set the frame for U.S. policy in this variation, how it relates to NATO policy to [inaudible].

Our objective in Bosnia is that we are trying to reach a peace agreement in Bosnia. We are not fighting a war. We're trying to reach a peace agreement. We're using our best diplomatic skills to try to reach that agreement. While we're doing that, we have military actions underway. The first approximation unrelated peace

agreement. Military actions are designed to lower the level of violence while the peace agreements are going on, and they've been quite successful in doing that, and I'll defend that position in just a minute. Also while we're doing that we have some humanitarian operations going on. Delivering food, medicine blankets. That's a pretty big operation.

To understand what we're doing here you have to separate those two aspects. They're moving on related and parallel tracks.

In peace agreements we have, in conjunction with the Western Europeans and the Russians, have agreed on a peace plan, the so-called [inaudible], been accepted by the Bosnian government, rejected by the Bosnian-Serbs. Our strategy in that path is to try to bring an agreement, to try to pressure the Serbs to come up with an agreement on that by the spring [inaudible].

Two components for doing that are, first of all, getting Serbia to cut off war supplies to the Bosnian-Serbs, which is happening to a degree but not completely. And one whole set of actions trying to increase the improvement of that compliance. Cut off the leakage through there.

We're getting some substantial Russian support in that. Minister of Defense Grachev, who knows the situation on the ground in Serbia, in Bosnia probably as well as any outsider, believes that if we can truly cut off those supplies, the Bosnian Serbs would be unable to successfully prosecute a war in just a matter of a month or two. He may be overly optimistic on that point.

The other thing we're doing in that regard is increasing the pressure to the threat of air strikes. That was one track. The second track is reducing the level of violence. We do that through NATO. NATO then responding to UN mandates which call for member nations and coalition nations to support this, and provide the military arms in carrying out a UN mandate.

We do it in three different regards. We've stopped the aerial bombardment of the city of Bosnia, that's completely effective. The Serbs have only tried to do that once in the last year, and we shot down three of their planes. That was the end of that.

We've got an air patrol flying over Bosnia every day. Eighty airplanes involved. That's a big operation. It's stopped the aerial bombardment. We talk about it now, but just think what the flow would be like if they were bombing cities every day.

The second thing we've done is stop the artillery bombardment that started first with Sarajevo and then [inaudible], and threatening to extend to other areas if

need be. That has been a little leaky in the last few weeks as you know. But carry your mind back to last December or Last January when there were literally a thousand shells a day going into Sarajevo and over a period of a year there were about 10,000 people killed in Sarajevo by artillery shells. So that's been very successful relative to what [it was] before.

We offer close air support to the United Nations ground forces as they call for it. Now almost by definition, ground support has to be called for by the ground forces. NATO doesn't [inaudible]. We have only air forces.

We have take the position, and I led this move in the Defense Ministers meeting in Spain. Nevertheless, we had something to say about how it was conducted. What we said at that meeting was if NATO air support is called for, we must have the freedom to apply it effectively. But we explicitly said at that meeting that we not only understand that it's important that this be a dual key arrangement. NATO does not call for the air support, it responds to the call. So we never [inaudible] right to unilaterally conduct the airstrikes. What we want is the right to if we conduct them, to conduct them by our rules. We have gotten now an agreement with the United Nations for doing that.

They may decide under those rules they don't want to call for air strikes. It may never happen. I don't think that's going to be the case, but that's what we'll have to see.

Q: If the offensive by the Muslims and the Croats [inaudible] in a more serious fashion than they're now doing, and the UN sits on its hands, is it possible that...

A: Say that again.

Q: If this new Bosnian government offensive really gets going and the Serbs as a result start shelling safe havens, what would happen?

A: I'll predict in that case that the United Nations UNPROFOR would call for air strikes against the Serb artillery pieces and NATO would supply them, and they'd supply them according to out rules. I believe we've raised the threshold enough on this that General de la Lapresle and General Rose won't call for them lightly. They'll only call for them if they think there's a real provocation. But if they call for them we'll deliver by our rules.

Q: [inaudible] ...overview of where you see our forces now [inaudible]. Are we adequately [inaudible] around the world? Could you take more cuts? [inaudible] states that got hit hard like California, or because they really are [inaudible].

A: It's a complicated question, and I'll try to be as clear and a simple as I can about it. Simply while still being clear.

I visit our military bases all over the world frequently, several times a month. I not only talk with the commanders, I go out and talk with the troops. General Shali does the same thing. Our Chiefs of Staff of the services do the same thing. We get pretty good feedback on that. Our military forces today have high morale, high readiness, high visibility, and anyone who says otherwise either doesn't know or [inaudible]. I'm looking for problems.

In the course of looking I find many problems which could cause a problem in readiness, capability a couple of years downstream, so I'm trying to fix those problems before they become manifest.

In the course of fixing those problems I'm shifting resources in the budget. Since I'm operating on a fixed top line, that means moving funds from one account to another account. The account that I'm moving it out of is the so-called modernization account. We'll be buying fewer airplanes, fewer ships, and fewer tanks because I'm shifting money into the things that are needed to maintain the readiness and capability of the forces, and the morale of the forces.

This is my priority, and I've stated it about as clearly as I know how to state it. It sounds like rhetoric but it really is my priority and I really spend money that way and make decisions based on that. That, by the way, is accepted and understood in the services now. It's also understood in the defense industry but not accepted because they are the bill payers for this, the modernization has declined further, [inaudible].

As a result of these shifts, I'm able to head off the problems that would be occurring downstream. Some of these are just morale problems. We have insisted that we hold the line on pay increases compatible with inflation. That was not in the original budget. We put it in the budget so the future years budget has that in. That was a very expensive, [inaudible].

I'm putting in an initiative this year which I'll be reporting in another week or so, called Quality of Life Initiatives, which does things to improve the living quality of the soldiers at their bases. We're doing things to increase the amount of the percentage of time they spend deployed as a function of time, [inaudible]. In this case since we can't increase the total number of troops, it's bringing in more Reserve and Guards [inaudible].

Q: [inaudible]

A: No. It has to do with my judgment that the capability of the forces and readiness of the forces depends, first of all, on the training levels and the ground spirit of the people in the forces. That's very, very good today, and it's my job to keep it that way.

To get specifically to the question that every time there's an accident, every time there's a suicide, somebody raises the question did this have anything to do with... Is this indicative of the decline in [inaudible]. The answer to that is quite clearly, no. There are several ways of observing that.

I've watched the trends. Month by month, we measure these things. There's no increase in [inaudible]. ...ten year history of [suicides]. The numbers are uncannily constant from year to year. Incidentally, at a rate slightly less than the suicide rate in the civilian population. So the thought that there is some special tendency to suicide in the military is just baloney. The statistics are very clear. First of all, that's not the case. There are somewhat fewer suicides in the military than in civilian. Secondly, there's no increase in the trend on a year to year basis over the ten year history we're looking at.

Q: I don't have the numbers in front of me but I know we had a story in the paper last year that argued that point.

Q: [inaudible] were whether the investigations were appropriately conducted, whether the families...

A: That's a perfectly valid point.

Q: Many of the cases look like homicides, not suicides.

A: Again, this is not a problem unique to the military. Every time a suicide is committee, every time there is a suicide, with any degree at all of ambiguity that was done. In the absence of a defined suicide note or whatever, the families would like to believe that it is not a suicide and it was either a murder or an accidental death. So if you look at the whole history of investigations, military and civilian, you'll find that's sort of a [inaudible].

The only thing that's unique to the military is we have our own processes and our own set of people for [inaudible]. Therefore, it's a fair question, do we conduct this process right. So what I'm putting my energies on is this is looking at our process of following up on suicides.

Q: ...books closed on those cases that [inaudible]?

A: No, not at all. The question is, should we be careful not to rush the judgment, because these do affect families and affect them very profoundly. It's not just compensation issues, it's the psychological issues. So we have to pay a lot of attention to that.

There are two issues I look at, one which I have an answer to, and the other [inaudible]. First is, is there anything in the data which suggests that the trend in the military is more prone to suicides than civilians, or the military more prone to

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suicides the last year or two than in the previous five or six years, and the answer is no.

That question, the answer is a very clear an unequivocal answer. The second question, does the military do a good job with its unique military investigative process in following up on suicides and investigating reports, and I think that is what I'm looking into, and trying to see if I can find ways to...

Q: [inaudible], and if there should be another episode [inaudible] the line [inaudible], there were a requirement to send them back again, [inaudible] problems, and one hears that the Gulf [inaudible] Saudis aren't [inaudible]. I've heard there's a thought of creating a Gulf defense army. Is that in the works? How does the United States [inaudible]? How are we going to finance containing Saddam if [inaudible]?

A: Three quick comments on that. First, we are asking to be created a fund to provide reimbursement for the expenses that we and the United Kingdom incurred in this last operation.

Q: [inaudible]
A: The Gulf countries.

Q: Including the Saudis?
A: Yes.

Those discussions are well advanced at this point but still underway, so I can't give you the final result of it.

Secondly, we are forward basing to help prevent another threat to us. We're forward basing more equipment and more military systems than we've had before, and we're seeking continuing support [inaudible]. That discussion is well advanced and I think [inaudible]. That includes pre-positioned army equipment, periodic exercises with those equipments, and it includes the basing of some of our airplanes in both Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

Finally, we and the United Kingdom have issue a de marche that Iraq withdraw [inaudible], said don't send Republican Guard forces south of the 32nd Parallel or we will take appropriate action, and we've backed that up by augmenting the air forces that we have over there, so that we have in country on alert the forces to do that. In other words, we're adding air-to-ground capability to the air-to-air capability we already have there to enforce the no-fly prohibitions in that area.

So those are the three things intended to primarily head off the probability of another third invasion of Saddam Hussein towards Kuwait, but also to help recover some of the expenses.

Q: Do you like your job?
A: It's the most exciting damn job in the world. I'd just as soon it be a little less exciting. One crisis a month would be enough, really.

Q: [inaudible]
A: Oh, I think [inaudible]. The South Koreans always, you have to remember the situation now. This affects them more than it affects anybody.

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A: ...Their government had a hell of a lot to do with this agreement. In fact, as I indicated to you, we were prepared to break off and walk away from it a few weeks ago when we thought that the North Koreans were not going to agree to a North/South dialogue.

Q: Thank you.

(END)

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